

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Faith School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2002-2003**

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Dates of On Site Visit: September 24, 2002

Date of Report: September 30, 2002

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Office of Special Education. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Child Find and Screening Articles
- Screening Activities

- Comprehensive Plan
- Referral, Evaluation & Placement Data
- Student File Reviews
- Enrollment Table (E)
- IDEA Application
- Child Count 2001
- SAT-9 Participation Table (D)
- Personnel Data Table (B)
- Training Needs Summary

Meets Requirements

The Faith School District has an effective ongoing child find and referral system in place to ensure students are identified without unnecessary delay.

The district has in place a system for monitoring student progress towards the state's performance goals. The steering committee indicated that all staff is certified according to state standards.

Needs Improvement

The district indicated a need for personnel development in the areas of behavior management, emotional disturbance, specific learning disabilities and ADD/ADHD.

Validation Result

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team found documentation to verify that child find and referral services were in place to identify and provide services for special needs children in a timely manner. A system is in place for monitoring student progress towards the state standards and all special services staff are certified according to the state standards

Needs Improvement

The educational staff indicated a need for personnel development in the areas of behavior management, emotional disturbance, specific learning disability and ADD/ADHD. This need was validated by the review team and based on the training need summary completed by the educational staff.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Child Find Articles
- Screening Announcements
- Student File Review
- Child Count
- Parent Survey
- PreSchool Program
- District Policy
- Training Needs Summary
- Suspension/Expulsion Data Table C

Promising Practices

The Faith Community/School Library provides an integrated preschool program. This program is available to all children whether or not they have a disability.

Meets Requirements

The Faith School District provides a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities. To ensure a free appropriate public education the district has an appropriate policy in place for the removal of children with disabilities from school for more than 10 days

Need Improvement

The district needs to continue the development and adoption of a system to track potential disciplinary/behavioral student concerns.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The Faith Public Library provides for a community integrated preschool program for any child age three or older, who is not attending kindergarten. The monitoring team confirmed that this provided a unique educational opportunity in the community for students that may or may not have a disability.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team validated that suspension and expulsion policies were in place and a free and appropriate public education was being provided to students in the Faith School District.

Needs Improvement

Through staff interview and CIMPs data the monitoring team validated the steering committees concern in regards to the development of a more systematic process for tracking behavior, which may lead to the removal of a student due to disciplinary action.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A team of qualified staff conducts a comprehensive evaluation and planning of evaluations includes parent input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for

eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- MDT/Eligibility Report
- Educators Survey
- Training Needs Summary
- Prior Notice/Consent
- Student File Review
- Personnel Records/Certification
- Disabling Condition Data Table G
- Child Count Data

Meets Requirements

The Faith School District provides an opportunity for parental input in the planning of student evaluations. The district provides appropriate written notice to parents or guardians and informed consent is obtained before assessments are administered.

The Faith School District provides comprehensive evaluations for students by certified staff. The student's are evaluated in all areas of suspected disability, using valid assessments. Based upon assessment data the student's eligibility is determined. If a student is eligible for services the evaluation information is used to develop an effective IEP.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee indicates that functional evaluation needs to be administered, analyzed and summarized as part of each student's initial evaluation or reevaluation. It was also noted that single test procedures will not be used as the sole criterion for determining eligibility for special education.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

Through student file review and the CIMP's data the monitoring team validated that there were no systemic issues in the area of evaluation. The Faith School District provides an opportunity for parental input in the planning of student evaluations. The district also provides appropriate written notice to parents or guardians and informed consent is obtained before assessments are administered. The Faith School District provides comprehensive evaluations for students by certified staff. The students are evaluated in all areas of suspected disability, using valid assessments. Based upon assessment data the student's eligibility is determined. If a student is eligible for services the evaluation information is used to develop an effective IEP.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee indicated that functional evaluation should be administered, analyzed and summarized as part of each student initial or reevaluation process. It was also noted that single test procedures are not to be used as the sole criterion for determining eligibility for special education. Upon reviewing individual student files the monitoring team validated that there were no systemic issues in the

area of evaluation, but several isolated incidences concerning test procedures did exist. The district has since clarified these issues and provided information to ensure all evaluation procedures are followed.

Principle 4-Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Transfer of Parental Rights at Age of Majority
- Student File Reviews
- Administrators Survey
- Parent Survey
- Student Handbook
- Prior Notice/Consent
- FERPA Publication
- Complaint Data Table (L)
- Due Process Data Table

Meets Requirements

The Faith School District ensures that parents are fully informed of their parental rights.

The district procedures are published annually and parents are provided the opportunity to examine the educational records of the child. If parents have a complaint the district has policies and procedures in place for responding to complaints and/or hearing requests.

Needs Improvement

The school district needs to inform students and parents of the transfer of special education rights to the student at least one (1) year prior to the student turning 18. The district needs to compile an information packet for parents in the event that an independent educational evaluation is requested.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team was in agreement with the items stated in the Meets Requirements area.

Needs Improvement

The monitoring team validated that there were procedures for independent educational evaluation stated in the district's comprehensive plan. The steering committee indicated the procedures could be more effectively understood if an information packet was provided.

The steering committee indicated a concern about meeting the timelines for the transfer of special education rights to the student at least one year prior to the student turning 18. The monitoring team was in agreement and noted a form was to be utilized to document this process.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Administrators Surveys
- Teacher Surveys
- Student Surveys
- Parent Surveys
- Student File Reviews
- SAT 9 Data Table
- Screening Referral List

Meets Requirements

The Faith School District screens students birth through five and refers children to further evaluation if warranted. Upon qualifying for special education services an IEP is developed and reviewed annually. Parents of a student with a disability are encouraged to play an active role in the IEP process. The district ensures appropriate team membership at all meetings for students with disabilities; several regular education teachers are present at all IEP meetings for students. All students participate in state or district wide assessments at their appropriate level.

Needs Improvement

The district needs to ensure that a student's course of study will be developed and written into their IEP no later than age 14. The steering committee also indicated that the justification statement for placement must describe why the student's instruction cannot be accomplished within the regular classroom setting.

Out of Compliance

The students present levels of performance, that are linked to functional assessment, need to include the student's skills (strengths and needs) and how their disability effects their involvement/progress in the general curriculum. The IEP needs to include the service, location and frequency of the student's special education and related services to be provided. Progress reports need to reflect the student's progress toward their annual goals.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team was in agreement with the items listed in the Meets Requirements category.

Needs Improvement

The steering committee had indicated that a student's course of study would be developed and written into their IEP no later than age 14. The monitoring team has moved this to the out of compliance area, as the course of study is not completed properly. The course of study did not indicate specific courses for electives and was not always in place by age 14. The long-term outcome statements are not student centered. The monitoring team has moved the steering committee concerns about justification statements to the out of compliance area, as justification statements did not follow the accept/reject format for placing students in the least restrictive environment.

Out of Compliance

ARSD: 24:05:27:01.03 Content of IEP

The monitoring team was in agreement with the steering committee statements made in regards to the development of present levels of performance. Though student file review it was noted that the present level of performance was not linked to functional assessment. The present levels of performance did not always include the student's strengths and weaknesses in relationship to the student's disability. There were no present levels of performance identified in relationship to transition activities and goals.

The course of study for transition age students did not indicate specific courses for electives and the course of study was not always in place by age 14. The long term outcome statements are not student centered. Example: ("the team felt or "the parent felt")

The monitoring team has moved the steering committee concerns about justification statements to the out of compliance area, as justification statements did not follow the accept/reject format for placing students in the least restrictive environment. In two student files reviewed by the monitoring team the justification statements described the services provided.

In the area of IEP content the review team and steering committee indicated that in three out of seven files reviewed the location of related services was not being designated on the related service page of the IEP.

The steering committee states that progress reports need to reflect the student's progress toward their annual goals. The monitoring team located progress reports in six out of seven files reviewed and could not validate this as an "out of compliance area" and would move this to the needs improvement area based on the steering committees concerns.

ARSD: 24:05:27:13 Transition Services

Though file review it was evident that there was not a coordinated set of transition activities in place for students 16 and over. In two of the transition age student files under the individual service area, statements were made such as "we will be addressing" or "not a service".

The long-term outcomes for employment and independent living for these students were statements based on how the team felt or the parent felt and were not student driven.

The present levels of performance did not indicate the student's present levels in regards to the area of transition.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive Plan
- Child Count
- Personnel Data Table
- Alternative Placement Table (F)
- Parent Survey
- Student Survey
- Cross Peer Participants
- Examples of LRE in Extracurricular and Community Activities
- Technology Experiences

Promising Practice

The Faith School District encourages students to participate in the cross peer program. The students sign up to be cross peers in the classroom setting. Students with and without disabilities are provided with the opportunity to be role models for other children as they cross peer.

Within the Faith School District all children have access to technology. The Faith School District has two (2) DDN rooms and has computers in all of their classrooms. Online and DDN classes are available to all students including those with disabilities.

The Faith School District provides children with disabilities the opportunity to participate and be recognized in the following areas: honor roll, Longhorn of the Week, Special Olympics, prom, senior trip, participation in post-prom party, volleyball, basketball, football, track, music contests and band.

Meets Requirements

The Faith School District provides children in special education services with the necessary supports to be successful in the least restrictive environment. Children receive services in the least restrictive environment.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The monitoring team validated that the cross peer program was a unique way to allow students to go into a classroom and act as a peer support person or tutor with other regular and students with special needs. This program empowers students to play a leadership role and provide positive supports to their classmates. The team validated that there are two students with special needs participating in the cross peer program.

The review team also noted that the district utilized the DDN system. During the 2001-2002 school year six of the seven students on IEPs participated in a least one DDN class.

The Faith school district is equipped to provide students with experiences in technology. All classrooms have access to a mobile cart of laptops. The Kurzweil scanner is being used to provide more efficient programming for students with special needs.

The Faith School District indicated that students participate and are recognized in school activities, projects, sports and extra curricular events. The monitoring team recognizes that the Faith School District provides excellent opportunities and recognition for students with special needs who participate in these events.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team validates that the Faith School District provides a variety of opportunities for students to participate and be recognized in extra-curricular and other school related activities. Because state and federal regulations require students to participate in extra-curricular and school related activities, the review team has placed it within the Meets Requirements area.